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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; AMIA CASE - INTERPOL TO ORDER ARREST OF
FIVE IRANIANS; SEPTEMBER 11 MASTERMIND; ARGENTINE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
THE PARIS CLUB; 03/16/07; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Major international stories today focus on Interpol's Executive Committee unanimously accepting Argentina's petition to have red notices issued against five Iranians and one Lebanese (although not for former Iranian President Akbar Rafsanjani), suspected of involvement in the 1994 AMIA bombing; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed claiming responsibility for the September 11 attacks and the beheading of US journalist Daniel Pearl; the impact of Mohammed's claim on criticism of the US suspect questioning methods used in the "Global War on Terrorism;" and the Argentine Government's negotiations with the Paris Club.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "Fifteen years without an answer"

Ricardo Kirschbaum, general editor of leading "Clarín," penned "The decision was made just at the right moment. Fifteen years away from the attack against the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Interpol accepted Argentina's petition to have red notices issued against five former Iranian government officials and one Lebanese for their alleged involvement in another major terrorist attack - the one against the AMIA..."

"This international warrant signifies partial acknowledgment that the Argentine claim is legitimate, although it does not make certain that the conspiracy which took the car-bomb to the AMIA was decided by the Iranian intelligence apparatus and Hezbollah. What is still more patent is that all this picks up what Israel and the US have always thought - this is to say, Iran masterminded the terrorist attack."

"... The abrupt change in the official investigation of Iran in the framework of the AMIA case was also seen as an outcome of a reshuffled and improved US-Argentine bilateral relationship."

- "Methods feeding criticism of Bush"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (03/16) "Three years ago, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's confession would have reaped tangible benefits to the Bush administration. It would have contributed votes for Bush's reelection and renewed support for his 'global war on terrorism.'"

However, yesterday, it brought more criticism of Bush. The fact that he sent troops to Iraq that should have focused instead on fighting Al Qaeda and the way the confession of Osama Bin Laden's aide was obtained feeds mistrust in the Middle East and criticism from the international community.

"Mohammed's confession could also serve to assess the power Bush still retains and the other side of the coin, which is the counterweight that the Supreme Court of Justice could wield..."

"... Mohammed's claim could also feed the arguments of those who defend the existence and efficacy of Guantanamo's controversial centers of detention.

"However, Mohammed's claim also revives criticism of the policies carried out by the White House ever since the September 11 attacks."

- "Strong spat between Miceli and the Paris Club"

Leading "Clarín" carries an op-ed piece by Marcelo Bonelli, economic columnist of the paper, who comments (03/16) "Felisa Miceli had a harsh exchange of letters with Xavier Musca, the head of the Paris Club... Miceli rejected all the demands set by Musca for Argentina to strike a deal with the G7.

"Miceli is against G7 advice to use Argentine reserves in order to pay off the country's defaulted debt with the Paris Club.

"... The (Argentine) Government will not make progress on any negotiation to reach a deal with the IMF...

"The situation reflects a political issue - the negotiations with the Paris Club are stalled..."

"Until last night, no meeting between Miceli and US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson had been scheduled. Minister Miceli asked US

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Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon for the meeting, who committed to arranging it but so far there has been no confirmation.

"The Argentine Government suspects the delay could be caused by Washington's irritation over the Argentine Government's ties with Hugo Chavez.

"Kirchner lashed out: 'They are a bunch of hypocrites. Why don't they say the US and Venezuela have business together of some 50 billion dollars?'"

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